

**PVTA  
Pioneer  
Valley  
Transit  
Authority**

**Administrative Headquarters  
Old North Main St. Firehouse  
2808 Main Street  
Springfield, MA 01107  
(413) 732-6248**

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**MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
March 29, 2017**

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on March 29, 2017 at the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Office located at 2808 Main Street in Springfield, MA, at 12:00 P.M.

**1. ROLL CALL**

	<u><i>Present (45.21 vote)</i></u>	<u><i>Not Present (16.79 vote)</i></u>
Agawam		Richard Theroux
Amherst	Doug Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow	Carolyn Brennan	
Easthampton		Linda Talbot
Granby	Jessica Langlois	
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Rebecca Moriarty	
Holyoke		Mayor Alex Morse
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow		Mark Gold
Ludlow		Carmina Fernandes
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
Palmer	Paul Burns	
Pelham		Mark Santos
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan	
Springfield	Anthony Wilson	
Sunderland		Sherry Patch
Ware	Nancy Talbot	
Westfield	Peter Miller	
West Springfield	Jim Czach	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg	J.M Sorrell	
Rider Representative	Patrick Burke	
Other's Present		

A quorum of 45.21 majority vote being present, Chairman Narkewicz called the meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:13 PM; majority vote of 30.01 present.

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

## **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes of the October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Special Advisory Board Meeting and the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Special Advisory Board Meeting.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Talbot) to approve the minutes of the October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Special Advisory Board Meeting and the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Special Advisory Board Meeting.

Chairman Narkewicz asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for all those in favor to say aye.

Carolyn Brennan of East Longmeadow abstained.

Motion passed by a majority vote.

## **4. REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATOR RETIREMENT AND SEARCH PROCESS FOR HIRING NEW ADMINISTRATOR**

Chairman David Narkewicz started by mentioning the last meeting held on January 25<sup>th</sup> where the Administrator circulated a letter as part of her packet announcing her plan to retire and the actions that followed thereafter.

He mentioned that in the letter the Administrator provided the requisite days' worth of notice she's required under the contract with a target date of April 28<sup>th</sup>. The PVTA Board meeting was never convened however because there was not a quorum.

Consequently, the Chairman requested that the Administrative Assistant circulate the letter to the Board via email and noting that he would begin the process of forming a screening committee to move forward with the search process. He then looked at the model followed in 2006, the last time a screening committee was formed. At that time, the committee was comprised of 6 towns and the President of PVPC, Tim Brennan. So, in looking to form a screening committee he attempted to follow that same format.

The Chairman then asked Lenn Howe, HR Manager to prepare a job posting. The posting was done in early February given the April 28<sup>th</sup> deadline. The position was advertised in 13 publications, nationally, locally, online, etc.

Chairman David Narkewicz later reached out to Board members from 6 communities: Amherst, Belchertown, Easthampton, Northampton, Springfield and West Springfield as well as Tim Brennan of PVPC to ask them if they would serve on a screening committee. The intent was to meet after the job posting expired on March 8<sup>th</sup> with a goal to be able to present finalists to the full Advisory Board to then interview and potentially select a new Administrator.

The Chairman then stated that Mr. Burns of Palmer raised some concerns about the process and whether it was being followed appropriately. The Chairman stated that the rules and bylaws are silent on screening committees and hiring process but because of the concerns he felt it was in the best interest of the Board to delay the screening process until coming to a full Board Meeting.

Therefore, at the current meeting, Chairman David Narkewicz would be seeking clarification from the Board on what the process should be as he would like to move forward. He stated that he would be asking the board to schedule an April meeting because an April meeting was not originally scheduled so that a screening committee could meet and hopefully bring finalists to the Board.

Mr. Burns expressed concern about the process not following the by-laws, and being subject to legal review by any candidate who is not chosen.

Chairman David Narkewicz stated that the by-laws are clear that the Chair appoints all the committees, and the Chair appoints all the Chairs of the committees. The Board typically authorizes the Chair to form a special committee.

Mr. Burns stated that the Board however did not take that action. The Chairman agreed and stated that he would like to leave this meeting having a screening committee to move forward, so he would like guidance from the Board on how to proceed.

Nancy Talbot of Ware commented on the importance of following Open Meeting Laws. The Chairman agreed and stated that he has received guidance from the PVTa legal counsel on that and invited her- Michelle Randazzo of Kopelman & Paige to speak.

Michelle Randazzo stated in her opinion the notice requirements in that section of the by-laws applies to regular or special meetings of the Advisory Board as a whole. The Board can choose to apply a greater requirement to the committee but they are dealing with two competing issues and one of the things that must be considered when moving forward with the process is timing. At a minimum, the committee would need to comply with open meeting law requirements, which is much shorter than the by-law requirements. The intent of the by-laws is to make sure that the larger body of the Advisory Board members has adequate notice to be here. When convening a smaller group, such as a smaller screening committee, the goal to be served is making sure that you've complied with open meeting laws so that the public is aware of the process and to observe the proceedings, and the members of the committee have adequate notice. One of the purposes of the meeting today is for the Board to decide if there ought to be an application of the greater notification requirements.

J.M. Sorrell of Williamsburg asked if there is any provision for interim leadership to avoid rushing to a decision. The chairman responded that there is always that potential.

J.M Sorrell also asked what the logic behind the initial committee formation was. The Chairman responded by saying that his intent was to bring together a mixture of different sized communities, Springfield and Amherst being some of the larger communities that PVTa serves, Belchertown's representative served on the previous search committee and has transit related experience, Easthampton's representative is a COA Director, West Springfield's representative is a member of the Joint Transportation Committee and Northampton which would be represented by him, a Mayor. He was looking at a blend of communities but also

the makeup. The goal of the committee would be to come up with uniform questions to ask the interviewees and do an initial screening but really the decision would be of the Advisory Board body.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Sullivan/Wilson) to empower the Chair to form a screening committee to vet candidates for the position of PVTA Administrator.

Chairman Narkewicz asked if there was any discussion.

Carolyn Brennan of East Longmeadow stated that she initially noticed that there was no one from Paratransit and was curious why a COA Director was chosen for the committee over someone who is on the Paratransit Committee?

The Chairman responded by stating that at the time he was looking to balance communities but that the motion was to empower him to select the committee and he could certainly take the importance of having paratransit under advisement.

Steve Huntley of Chicopee thought it was important that the Board all feel good about the process and wanted to mention that anyone who wanted to dedicate time to the process should be invited to do so. He also mentioned that years of service on the Board be taken into consideration.

Patrick Burke, Rider representative mentioned that he was comfortable with not being a part of the committee but wanted the opportunity to submit questions.

The Chairman stated that it was a great suggestion and mentioned that the HR Director was already drafting questions as well.

Chairman Narkewicz asked if there was any further discussion.

Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

## **5. SCHEDULING OF APRIL 26, 2017 SPECIAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING TO FINALIZE AN APPOINTMENT OR EXTEND THE PROCESS FURTHER**

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Talbot/Sullivan) that the Advisory Board schedule a special meeting on April 26, 2017.

Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

## **6. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (CHAIRPERSON)**

Steve Huntley reported the following:

The Finance Committee met on Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as by law the draft budget must be presented by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

For the first time in eight years the CFO presented a deficit budget of \$1.8M because the budget was created based on the Governor's budget. The Governor's budget was level-funded since



FY15. In FY16 the legislature over road this decision and there is hope that they continue to override the Governor's budget. The CFO stated that she had to be conservative when drafting the FY18 budget. However, it is so early in the budget process that there is no reason to cause alarm at this moment in time.

Chairman Narkewicz asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Wilson of Springfield asked when will the budget be finalized?

Administrator MacInnes stated that the board would vote on the final budget by June 1<sup>st</sup>. She went on to say that the Operating cost issue affects Capital as well and that there will be challenges on either side.

Mr. Wilson of Springfield stated that the cut looked drastic and asked if there was a list of things that would be affected due to this cut?

The Administrator responded that it was indeed a drastic cut and that a list could be provided of items affected. None of which the PVTA wants to recommend, like service cuts, but the list could be provided if necessary.

The CFO added that PVTA was going after all federal funds and that she would not be adding any additional money to the insurance reserves if necessary. A risk she would rather not take.

Mr. Wilson of Springfield asked if the Board would be kept up to date as PVTA formulates what the effects on services will be.

Both the Administrator and the CFO agreed that the Board would be kept up to date and that the Final Budget would have a list of how to balance the budget.

Mr. Sullivan of South Hadley asked if it were possible to have the budget placed on the PVTA website so that the Board and public can access it versus printing it. Chairman Narkewicz and the CFO agreed to place the budget on the PVTA website.

## **7. REPORT OF THE PARATRANSIT COMMITTEE (CHAIRPERSON)**

Carolyn Brennan reported that the committee discussed the Pilot Program however the program still has to go to Town Meetings, for which a placeholder already exists. Therefore, nothing will be presented until after these meetings occur.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Sullivan/Talbot) to accept both the Finance Committee and Paratransit Reports.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **8. APPROVAL OF EAST LONGMEADOW, HAMPDEN, AND LONGMEADOW PILOT PROGRAM**

As discussed in item 7, the towns involved will be meeting on the pilot programs at a future date and therefore the committee is requesting that they be able to meet on the item again.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Wilson/Sullivan) to move the Approval of East Longmeadow, Hamden and Longmeadow Pilot Program to Committee.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **9. 2017 STANDING SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBER APPOINTMENTS**

This item listed as an action item in error as the Chairman appoints the sub-committees.

## **10. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Mary MacInnes began her report by clarifying that despite what was being said:

- She would not be leaving to work for the MBTA
- She would not be returning to the PVRTA as a consultant but would be happy to answer any questions the new Administrator would have

She went on to announce the good news of the Cottage Street Operations Facility groundbreaking on April 19<sup>th</sup>, the opening of the Westfield Transit Pavilion on April 28<sup>th</sup> and mentioned that Congressman Neal, MassDOT and the press indicated that the transferring of operations to Union Station that was scheduled to happen in January was now scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup> even though neither PVRTA nor Peter Pan had signed the lease yet. She stated that the terms of the lease were not favorable financially as the berths were too expensive and that in terms of operations, the contract stated that a PA system would not be allowed outside and wanted to make a note that these were still outstanding issues.

## **11. MANAGER OF PLANNING & OPERATIONS REPORT**

Josh Rickman reported that there has been a decrease in fixed route ridership. Year to Date that decrease amounts to 8.5%, which is substantial. He stated that PVRTA would likely report under 12M riders this year. However, he assured everyone that it is not just PVRTA, that many transit agencies nationally are seeing a decrease in ridership. He attributed the decrease to numerous factors including construction, unemployment being at an all-time low, auto sales and gas prices remain under \$3.00.

Mr. Rickman also reported additions to the PVRTA website. Under the About section there is now a Tab called Performance & Efficiencies where a variety of information can be found such as financial information, route consolidations, surveys and route profiles.

Here you can find a route description for almost all PVRTA routes, the demographics it covers, how much fares are covering the operations of this route etc. It's a one stop shop to understanding how the PVRTA system works and what's going on with each individual route.

Remix is a new interactive tool that enables on the fly public engagement. It is updated with census data and allows PVRTA to do planning for Title VI projects in an hour versus the 2 to 3 weeks it took before.

PVRTA has been working with the city of Springfield on bus stop consolidations. Right now, the city of Springfield has 814 bus stops. PVRTA has made the recommendation to go down to 432 stops. PVRTA has met with all neighborhood councils, with the Commission of Disability, with the DPW, there have been 5 outreach sessions at the terminal to receive public feedback and will be meeting

the Traffic Commission to discuss the next steps. As part of the process PVTa is looking to add at least forty stops back in to the system. There will be an impact on 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the ridership but the bus stops are in such proximity that it shouldn't have a deterring effect. Overall, we are looking at this as an improvement to the community, improving speed of buses, limiting the number of accidents as most accidents happen as buses pull out of stops. PVTa will continue to work with the city of Springfield on this project.

PVTa has received a grant from MassDOT for ADA landing pads and will be pouring 159 pads between the curb and the tree belt to improve ADA access and make sure we are in compliance. The project will begin after approval from Department of Public Works and City Council is received.

Paratransit has experienced a decrease in ridership as well. The Operations department will be keeping an eye on this and PVTa will be looking at a multiple vendor system versus the current single vendor system for cost savings once the current contract with Hulmes expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Lastly, we have received another Commuter Transit Grant which will allow us to continue our Travel Training program through September of this year.

Chairman Narkewicz asked if there were any questions or comments on the Paratransit report.

Mr. Sullivan of South Hadley commented that there has been an increase of companies providing free transportation to their clients such as the Holyoke Hospital and that his may also be a contributor to the decrease.

## **12. NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Narkewicz stated that there is no new business to discuss

## **13. OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Narkewicz stated that there is no old business to discuss.

## **14. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Advisory Board meeting adjourned (O'Leary/Huntley) at 1:30 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

ATTEST:   
**BARBARA ROSAS**

**MINUTES APPROVED MAY 24, 2017**

